

Rs. 1,67,700 has been sanctioned by the Central Social Welfare Board for 82 institutions for 1955-56 at the State Board was constituted.

(f) (i) There is no President, there is a Chairman as the Head of the Advisory Board.

During 1954-55 Rs. 800. During 55-56 Rs. 1,300 till the end of August 1955. These amounts include travelling allowance and all the incidental expenses like entertaining guests, Board members, etc.

(ii) Nil. But the amount spent on jeep allotted to State Board Office is Rs. 1,150 from 1st December 1954 to the end of March 1955 and Rs. 1,100 from 1st April 1955 to 31st August 1955.

(iii) The question is not clear.

(iv) Rs. 3,800 to the end of August 1955.

(v) No rent was paid from December 1954 to 19th March 1955. From 20th March 1955 to the end of September 1955 Rs. 826-7-0 has been incurred.

(vi) Rs. 400 to the end of August 1955.

(vii) Rs. 34,825 to end of August 1955 for 10 Welfare Extension Projects.

### **Statement by the Speaker *re*: Leader of the Opposition.**

**Mr. SPEAKER.**—Sri R. K. Prasad and several other Hon'ble Members have been repeatedly raising the question whether Sri J. Mohamed Imam continues to be Leader of the Opposition in view of the reduction in the strength of his party.

On 20th June 1953 two days after this Assembly met for the first time after the general elections the Speaker made a statement on this very subject. He announced that 19 members of the Assembly had written to him that they had formed themselves into a party and that it should be recognised as the Opposition Party. The Speaker announced that he had so recognised the members as a Party, that he had treated them as the Opposition Party. Sri J. Mohamed Imam who was then Leader

was therefore treated as the Leader of the Opposition.

On the 26th June 1952, when Sri Mulka Govinda Reddy who was one of the 19 members of the Party gave notice of an adjournment motion, Sri Imam stated that this motion did not have the support of the Party, that the Party had been formed on a minimum common programme and that the members had agreed to differ on certain other matters. The Speaker then observed "I gave recognition to the Party for the simple reason that I thought that all the members who sent that requisition had a uniform policy. The present situation requires serious consideration." But when this matter again came up on the 3rd July 1952 the Leader of the House suggested that no decision need be given and that the Opposition Party would take some time to consolidate its position and that the matter may be allowed to rest.

Now that the matter has come up again I wanted to examine the exact circumstances in which the status of a Leader of the Opposition can be conferred on any Hon'ble Member, and have taken some time to do so.

The Office of the Leader of the Opposition has been imported into India with the British Parliamentary model which we have adopted. In regard to the British system, it has been observed by May in his Treatise on Parliamentary Practice as follows:—

"The importance of the Opposition in the system of Parliamentary Government, although it has only recently found its way into formal treatises, has long received practical recognition on the Procedure of Parliament. Even before the first Reform Act the phrase 'His Majesty's Opposition' had been coined—it is said by John Cam Hobhouse. Statutory recognition has been accorded through the grant of a salary of £ 2,000 a year to the Leader of the Opposition. The prevalence (on the whole) of the two party system has usually obviated any uncertainty as to which party has the right to be called the 'Official Opposition', it is the largest minority party which is prepared, in the event of the resignation of the Government, to assume office."

(MR. SPEAKER.)

Speaking of the functions of such an Opposition, May continues :

"Since the strength of modern party discipline makes a Ministry largely invulnerable to direct attack in the House of Commons, the criticism of the Opposition is primarily directed towards the electorate, with a view to the next election, or with the aim of influencing government policy through the pressure of public opinion."

He concludes :

"For the Opposition, regarded as a Parliamentary institution, it may be claimed that no better system has yet been devised for ensuring that the indispensable function of criticism shall be effectively co-ordinated and exercised in a constructive and responsible spirit."

In fact as observed by Jennings in his book on Parliament, the task of the Leader of the Opposition is of such great public importance that under the Ministers of the Crown Act 1937 he has a salary of 2,000 pounds per annum charged on the Consolidated Fund. It may seem strange, he says, that the Government should by taxation raise pound 2,000 a year in order to enable its principal opponent to criticise it : but in truth opposition is an essential part of democratic Government. The same author in another work says.

"Democratic government thus demands not only a Parliamentary majority but also a Parliamentary minority. The minority attacks the Government because it denies the principles of its policy. The Opposition will, almost certainly, be defeated in the House of Commons because it is a minority. It appeals to the electorate. It will, at the next election, ask the people to condemn the Government, and, as a consequence, to give a majority to the Opposition. Because the Government is criticised it has to meet criticism. Because it must in course of time defend itself in the constituencies it must persuade public opinion to move with it. The Opposition is at once the alternative to the Government and a focus for the discontent of the people. Its function is almost as important as that of the Government.

If there be no Opposition there is no democracy. 'His Majesty's Opposition' is no idle phrase. His Majesty needs an Opposition as well as a Government."

I have quoted at length to indicate the importance of an Opposition and the need for an opposition for the development of democracy and of democratic institutions in India. It is also clear that in order to be entitled to be called an Opposition, a party or a part of members in the House has to fulfil certain conditions. The conditions emerge from what I have stated above. Firstly, the Opposition should be an organised party both inside and outside the House with definite ideology and programme, with a party machinery. Secondly, it should be numerically the second largest party in the House. Thirdly, it would be capable of shouldering the responsibility of forming an alternate Government if the majority party is defeated or resigns.

Now while it is clear that no effort should be spared to foster the growth of an official Opposition, it is equally clear that these conditions are essential for an Opposition to discharge its responsibilities.

In India, however, we are in a formative stage and it may be difficult to get a tow system to order. We have therefore to adopt the practice prevailing in England to our special needs.

The Opposition while it has its own responsibilities, has, by virtue of being the Opposition, certain valuable privileges to which it is unnecessary to refer at length here. But before these privileges can be claimed it is necessary that some of the conditions I have referred to above are satisfied. The position of Sri Imam is that his party has a strength today of 7 in a House of 104 excluding the Speaker. The party position, as I have been able to ascertain it, is as follows :—

Congress	...	85
P.S.P.	...	7
Socialist	...	2
Independent	...	10
Total	...	104

It has been stated that in order to function as an Opposition, there should at least be a capacity to conduct the business of the House without having to rely on other members outside the party. A working rule that has been evolved in the several Legislatures in India is that there should at least be sufficient number of members to form a quorum.

What I have been saying all along is in relation to a party. Where no such party is forthcoming, the practice has sprung up of recognising groups. The main difference of course is that while there can be only one Opposition party, there can be several Opposition groups. In our House, as a matter of fact, there is only one party or group which consists of 7 members, the remaining members who do not belong to the Congress not being a group or party. It will be seen that unless some minimum number is fixed, all other conditions may be satisfied and yet we may have a group or party of just 2 or 3 members claiming recognition. I may add that this question was discussed at great length at a Conference of Presiding Officers held at Srinagar in 1954. The consensus of opinion was that while conditions in India were fluid and no particular rule regarding numbers could be laid down, it was necessary that some minimum should be fixed for a party and lower number for a group. In the Lok Sabha, the minimum required for a party is the quorum and for a group it is 30.

Taking into account all these several considerations, I am of the view that while the P.S.P. with its present membership cannot be called a party, it has to be recognised as a group. However as there is only one group in this House in the Opposition and as Sri Imam is the Opposition Leader, I am of the view that he is the Opposition Leader of the only Group in the Opposition and therefore the Leader of the Opposition.

### Members' Representations.

**Sri J. MOHAMED IMAM (Jagalur).—**  
A representation was made yesterday by some of my friends whether the

speeches made by me on the S.R.C. Report should be treated as the speeches made from Sri J. Mohamed Imam or as from the Leader of the Opposition. I would request the Chair to kindly treat my speeches, when they are forwarded to the Central Government, as the speeches, from the Leader of the Opposition.

**Sri M. PALANIYAPPAN (Ulsoor).—**  
I want to make a representation to the Speaker regarding the issue of passes to the Speaker's Gallery and the Visitors' Gallery. Sir, while issuing passes to the different Galleries of the House, most irregularities are being committed. Several times the Members had to receive a negative reply for passes. This morning, when I went to the tent where the passes are being issued, the clerk was missing from the tent and somebody directed me to go to the office and there also I was unable to get the passes. Likewise, I had to go up and down for several times and thereby I wasted 15 minutes. This is not the first time that I have experienced this handicap. Some of my other honourable friends have experienced the same difficulty. We will be getting some friends to witness the discussion of the Assembly.

Sometimes the passes issued on the 18th and 19th are being issued today. I do not know whether it is the mistake of the clerk concerned or some other body. Such things are happening day in and day out. In order to obviate all these troubles, I would just request the Chair to kindly see that the members of this House are shown due consideration while issuing passes to their friends. I think most of the members like me have been disappointed and they were unable to get the passes. When important discussions like the S.R.C. Report are held in the Assembly so many people would like to witness the discussion. On such occasions necessary arrangements should be made for the issue of passes.

I would like to draw the attention of the Chair to another important matter, viz., the distribution of questions and answers. These questions and answers will be given to the members just at